

SESSION 7

World Traveler

AN UNLIKELY CANDIDATE

Bible Text

Acts 9:1-19; 22:17-21

Session Key Verse

I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go. Psalm 143:8

Session Goals

Today each child will—

- ◎ learn how God revealed His choice of Paul as a missionary
- ◎ be willing to serve God in any way He directs

There are times when we adults face tasks we feel incapable of accomplishing. We don't always take Philippians 4:13, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength," as literally as we probably should. Similarly, the idea of being used by God as a missionary or in another capacity may cause some children to question their adequacy.

Today's session can help calm those fears as the children realize that God often uses those who seem unlikely candidates. In fact, it is more often that God uses people without the expected talents in a particular area because it is easier for those people to depend upon the Spirit's power than on their own human abilities. Greater spiritual victories result from their dependence on Him.

Help the children understand they do not need super abilities in themselves to fulfill God's plan for them. Their part is to be willing and obedient to do whatever He asks them to do. God will faithfully give them the strength, wisdom, and abilities needed to fulfill the plan He has for their lives.

Unit Key Verse

Go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19,20




Explorer Orientation

OPENING ACTIVITY AND PRAISE

Getting Ready To Go

(5-10 minutes)

From the previous sessions in this unit, prepare 10 questions and 10 answers each written on individual strips of paper. Divide the group into two teams and give five questions and five answers to each group. Choose the oldest in each team as team leaders and allow the younger →  of the two to begin the game by holding up a question. The team leader of the opposite team is to say, "God uses unlikely people," and hold up the answer. If the second team responds correctly by saying, "God uses unlikely people," and holds up the correct answer, that team wins 5 points. If the team either fails to say, "God uses unlikely people," or holds up the wrong answer, it will get no points for the response.

The teams will alternate with questions and answers regardless of whether they respond correctly or not.

Giving Time

(3 minutes)

Allow the children to participate in a time of giving to the Lord. You might want them to give an offering or participate individually in a special ministry.

Praise

(10 minutes)

Use the following suggested song from the Young Explorers cassette or CD: "He Has Called Me." Add songs of your own choosing for leading the children in a time of praise. Lead in prayer for this week's study.



Exploring Session Goals

PRE-BIBLE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Announcements And Skit

(5 minutes)

Give announcements and any guidelines you have for the children to follow during this time. Use the optional skit titled, "An Unlikely Candidate," found on page 133.

Items Needed

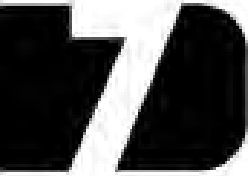
- 20 2- by 8-inch strips of paper (cut into four pieces)
- Felt-tip marker

Items Needed

- Young Explorers music CD or cassette

Items Needed

- Five pre-made



8- by 10-inch
or larger cards

Unlikely People

(5 minutes)

Prepare the cards by printing the following in all capitals, the first phrase on the front of the card, the second phrase on the back. BUSINESS EXECUTIVE/CLOWN IN A CIRCUS; ELDERLY WOMAN/PILOT OF A FIGHTER JET; TEENAGER/COLLEGE PRESIDENT; RESTAURANT COOK/STATE SENATOR; A RELIGIOUS MAN WHO PUTS CHRISTIANS IN PRISON/A MISSIONARY

I am going to show you four cards. On the front of each card is listed a type of person. On the back of each card is listed something that person does. Hold up Card 1 and read it. Flip the card to the back and read the description. Continue with the next three cards. Do these things sound like they could be true? Is it likely that an elderly woman would be the pilot of a fighter plane?

These examples may be extreme. It is unlikely that any of these would be true. However, do you know God often uses unlikely people to fulfill His plans? Remember Gideon, who was not a very brave man, yet God used him to lead an army? Or Esther, a poor girl God placed as queen of a country?

You may feel it is unlikely you could be a pastor, or a missionary, or in another area of —→ ⊙ ministry that God may plan for you. However, God sometimes picks unlikely people for His plans. Unlikely people rely more on Him instead of trying to do things in their own strength.

Hold up and read Card 5. I would say a person who puts Christians in prison would be —→ ⊙ very unlikely to be chosen as a missionary. Yet that was God's plan for this man. We'll learn today how God used this unlikely man.



Exploring The Word

BIBLE LESSON

(10 minutes)

- Acts 9:1-19; 22:17-21

Items Needed

- Bible
- Overhead projector
- Sheet of paper
- Transparency made from Overhead Master 4: Paul

1. A Persecutor Of Christians

When you think of a missionary, you think of someone who loves and obeys God. You think of someone who is kind and gentle. Before God called a man named Saul to be a missionary, he was not kind and gentle. Saul believed he was right about everything, so he did not listen to ideas other people had. Is this the kind of person we would expect God to call to be a missionary?

One of the things Saul felt he was right about was God. He did not believe Jesus is God's

~~Young Explorers~~

Son. Saul thought anyone who worshiped Jesus should be punished. So Saul went around persecuting the Christians. Who knows what persecute means? It means to cause trouble for someone or hurt them because of what they believe. Saul had Christians beaten and taken to prison. (Display the top half of the transparency made from Overhead Master 4 by placing a paper sheet over the bottom half.) He even approved of Christians being killed. This man was definitely an enemy of the Church!

After Saul persecuted the Christians in Jerusalem, he decided to go and persecute believers in other places too. He went to the high priest and got special permission to arrest any Christians he found in Damascus, a town about 200 miles away. He planned to bring them back to Jerusalem and have them put in prison.

2. A Changed Man

So Saul and some other men set off for Damascus, a trip that would take about 6 days. They were almost to Damascus when suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around Saul. Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

Saul was probably scared to answer, but he did. He asked, "Who are you?"

The voice answered back, "I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting. Now I want you to get up and go into Damascus. Someone there will tell you what you should do."

When Saul stood up, he realized the bright light had left him blind. The men with him had to lead him by the hand the rest of the way to Damascus.

If you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior, you probably won't experience what Saul did. You may be feeling you need something more in your life or you may be afraid of the future and want assurance of eternal life or you may feel bad about something wrong you have done. That's the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart. He wants you to come to Jesus, ask forgiveness for your sin, and receive salvation.


As Jesus dealt with Saul, God was preparing a Christian in Damascus named Ananias to talk to Saul. Ananias had heard about how Saul had been persecuting the Christians. How do you think Ananias felt when God told him to go talk to Saul? He was scared of Saul.

God told Ananias He planned to use Saul to tell the good news of salvation to many people. So Ananias obeyed God and went to the house where Saul was staying. He placed his hands on Saul and prayed for him and Saul could see again. Saul accepted Jesus as his Savior and was baptized in the Holy Spirit. This enemy of the Church was now a Christian!

3. A Missionary For Christ

(Remove the paper sheet from the transparency of Overhead Master 4 to reveal the bottom half.) Saul proved he had really accepted Jesus. He went to the synagogue churches to share the gospel with people. He told them Jesus is God and they needed to follow Him. When a person is saved, he should want everyone to know what God did for him. The Christians

were surprised because they knew Saul had always tried to stop people from following Jesus. When you became a Christian, did people believe you or did they watch for a change in your life?

Because God had chosen Saul and he was willing to follow God's plan, Saul became a  great missionary for God. God still calls sinners to be saved and tell the good news to others.

When Saul realized the plan God had for his life, he began to follow God's plan. Saul the persecutor became Paul the missionary. Why? Because Paul was willing to do what God wanted him to do.

We also must be willing to do whatever God wants us to do. Whatever God's plan is for our lives, we must be willing to follow it. We may be scared or feel we can't do it, but we can trust God to help us as we live out His plan. God's plan for us is for our good because He loves us so much.




Responding To The Word

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Prayer

(10 minutes)

Sing a few worship choruses to begin this part of the session.

Ask the children to kneel at their chairs and pray that God will help them be willing to serve Him now and in the future in all He wants them to do. As they are praying, pray aloud individually for each child, touching his shoulder or head. Have your workers assist you in  praying for the children. Let each child hear you ask God to help him be willing to serve God and do whatever He says.

If you have not yet accepted Jesus as your Savior, you can make that important choice today. Every person is born a sinner and the only way to have a right relationship with God and live in heaven with Him someday is to ask Jesus to forgive your sins. Jesus suffered and died so you can be forgiven. If you don't accept Him, you are choosing to reject Him. Will you receive Him today? Pray individually with each who responds. (Use the "Leading A Child To Christ" article on page 8 as a guide.)

Place The Plane

(10 minutes)

Draw or photocopy and cut out four small pictures of an airplane and carry them and the world map. The other items should be available nearby.

Did you ever feel you weren't able to do a certain job—that you just didn't have all the

Items Needed

- Bible
- Key verse written on transparency or chalkboard
- Tape
- Blindfold
- Stopwatch
- World map
- Four pictures of an airplane

talent needed? Well, you never have to fear any job God asks you to do. When God asks you to do something, He gives you the strength to do it. Whatever God's plan is for your life, He will help you do it.

Our part is to be willing to work for God and obey Him. Even if the job looks too big, if God has told us to do it, we can trust Him to make it possible for us to do it. Today's key verse says, "I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go." Psalm 143:8. When we place our trust in God, He will show us how to live our lives in the best way possible. Point to each verse word as you repeat it with the children several times.

I'm going to tape a world map to this wall. Then I will pick two people and blindfold one of them. The partner who is not blindfolded will pick a country of the world and show us where it is on the map. (Tell the child to pick a moderately large country.) To the blindfolded person, I will give a paper airplane with a piece of rolled tape on the back. I will spin the person with the plane three times and then start the stopwatch.

The blindfolded person must recite the key verse before being guided by his partner to place his plane on the chosen country. His partner can only guide him by telling him to move his hand up, down, left or right. After he tapes his plane to the right country, I'll stop the stopwatch and write their time on the chalkboard. Then I'll pick two different people to try to beat their time. Continue the game about three rounds.

→◎ Remember, God will help you to do whatever He asks you to do. Just be willing to trust Him and obey what He says!

Verse Pop-Up

(5-10 minutes)

I will begin saying the unit key verse (Matthew 28:19,20) and when I stop, I want someone who knows the verse to stand up and say the next word (and only one word). When he sits down, I want another of you to stand up and say the next word. Continue adding a word until the entire verse has been said.

When the verse has been completed lead the children in reciting it several times together.



Applying The Word

CLOSING ACTIVITIES

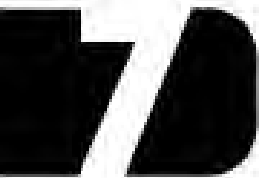
Whiz Ring Relay

(7-10 minutes)

Briefly review the key verse together. Demonstrate how to spin the whiz ring on your index finger. Then make two team lines, with the children spaced apart so they will not hit each other with the ring when they twirl it. Give a whiz ring to the first child on each team.

Items Needed

- Homemade whiz rings (buttons on a 12-inch string loop)



Items Needed

- Small amount of brewed coffee or tea
- Adult volunteer

Have him spin it on his index finger while saying the key verse. (You will need a worker to follow the whiz ring down each relay line to be sure the key verse is said correctly.) If he says the key verse correctly, the whiz ring is passed to the next person in line. If he says it incorrectly, he must try to say the key verse again. If he drops the ring, he must start over. The first team to finish passing the whiz ring wins.

What A Mess!

(5 minutes)

Have a worker wear an old blouse or shirt covered with tea or coffee stains. (The worker will be outside the classroom and then enter with the stained shirt when you are ready for this monologue.)

"Look at me! What a mess! I'm so embarrassed. You see, I was just riding on an airplane. Everything was going just fine and we were about halfway through the flight. The seat belt sign was off so I decided it would be OK to drink some coffee (tea).

"Well, just as I got my coffee, the seat belt sign came on. I thought it was strange. *The plane shouldn't be ready to land yet*, I thought. I decided to drink my coffee anyway.

"Suddenly the plane hit some air turbulence. Look what happened to me! I guess I should have obeyed the seat belt sign. It just didn't make sense at the time. I figured the pilot didn't really need us to put on our seat belts. I didn't understand why, so I didn't obey. What a disaster I made! Well, I'd better clean up. At least this time I can count on the room staying still!"

The actor exits and you address the children. This person didn't understand why he had to do what the pilot said, so he didn't obey. Maybe when God reveals His plan for your life, you won't understand why He picked that plan for you. It may even seem impossible. You may not understand why God is asking you to do it. Yet whatever it is God asks you to do, you must remember that He always knows what He's doing, even if you don't understand. So don't be like this person and disobey just because you don't understand why God has such a plan for you.

So many people knew Saul as the one who had persecuted Christians that he probably thought no one would listen to him tell about Jesus. Being a missionary was God's plan for —→ ⊙ Paul. He was willing to obey, and God helped Paul be a great missionary. We also must trust God and obey what He tells us. Only then will we be happy and accomplish His plan for us!

Around The World

(10 minutes)

Prepare by printing the names of eight different nations on paper, one name per sheet. Prepare review questions about the session.

Play a game of "Around The World" by laying out the nation papers in a large circle. Group the children into two teams. Each team will pick a child as their world traveler, who stands

Items Needed

- Eight "nation" papers and review questions

by the first paper.

Ask the first team a question. If they answer correctly, their traveler may move to the next paper. If they answer incorrectly, ask the other team. Alternate questions between teams.

Some sample questions:

- 1. What important quality should people have so God can use them? *(They must be willing to serve God.)*
- 2. What was God's plan for Saul's life? *(To be a missionary)*
- 3. What had Saul done to Christians? *(He persecuted them and put them in prison.)*
- 4. What happened to Saul on the way to Damascus? *(He saw a bright light, heard from Jesus, was blinded, and believed in Jesus.)*
- 5. Who prayed for Saul in Damascus? *(Ananias)*
- 6. True or False. God uses only people with a lot of talent. *(False)*

Career Willingness

(6-8 minutes)

Group the children in circles of 8 to 10 with one worker per group. The worker starts by saying, "If God wants me to be a (name of a career, such as a secretary), I'll be willing." The child on her right is then to repeat the phrase, add another career, then repeat the first person's career. For example, the second child might say, "If God wants me to be a lawyer or a secretary, I'll be willing." Continue around the circle.

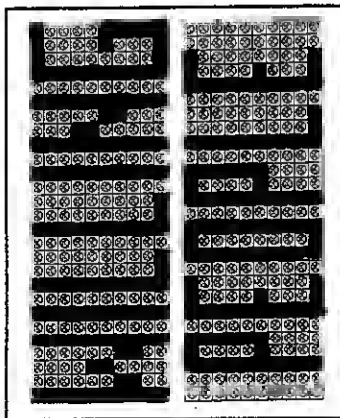
End the activity by having the workers remind the children that God wants us to be willing to follow His plan for us, even if we feel inadequate or don't understand why.

Activity Sheets

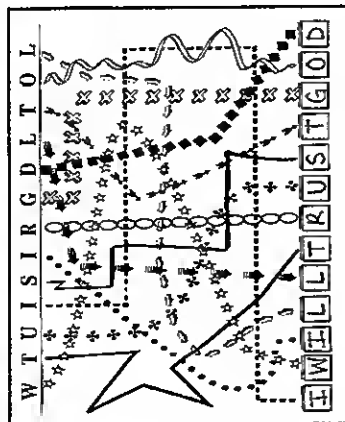
(10 minutes)

See page 4 for suggestions on how to use Activity Sheets, pages 7-1 to 7-3.

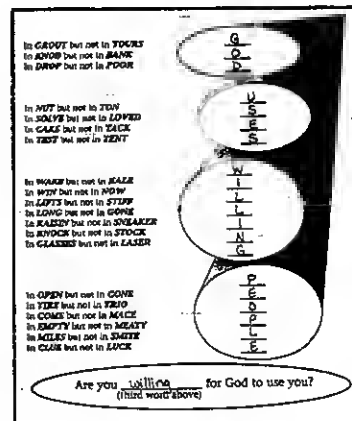
"Whom God Uses"
Session 7, page 1



"Message Mix Up"
Session 7, page 2



"God Wants To Use You"
Session 7, page 3



Items Needed

- Copies of Activity Sheets 7-1 to 7-3
- Pencils